



4 FOOD PACKAGE/DRAFT ISSUANCE

Effective: 3/1/98

4.10 Food Packages: General

Revised: 3/1/01

POLICY: Participants shall receive monthly food packages that are tailored to their nutritional needs and preferences and timeframes associated with issuance. Food packages shall be prescribed by a CPA, with RD approval and medical prescriptions as required for non-contract formulas (standard iron-fortified and special), low iron formulas, and medical nutritionals.

BACKGROUND: The WIC Program has developed and automated approximately 200 food packages. A food package is a combination of drafts (i.e., negotiable instruments, like checks, that go through the Federal Reserve System and then through a prepayment edit process at the bank) that specify the WIC approved food(s) and allowable quantities. The Project may combine predesignated drafts or create new drafts into a new package in order to address participant needs, but may only issue foods or quantities of them as allowed by Federal WIC Regulations and State policies.

PROCEDURE:

A. PACKAGE ISSUANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. A CPA prescribes the food packages. RD approval and medical documentation are required for the issuance of non-contract (standard iron-fortified and special) low-iron formulas, and medical nutritionals.
2. The federally allowed maximum quantities per monthly package may not be exceeded under any circumstances. See Policies 4.12, 4.14, and 4.21.
3. Food packages must be tailored according to age or status, nutritional needs, and preferences.
4. A food package must be provided the same day the participant is enrolled. (At recertifications, the “first day to use” on the drafts may be in the future.)
5. Food packages must be tailored according to the varied timeframes associated with issuance.

B. FOOD PACKAGE CHARTS

1. The Food Package Tailoring/Selection Charts (see Attachment) are used to select the appropriate food packages for participants. Briefly, there are:
 - a) regular food packages for women and children



- b) Breastfeeding Enhanced food packages
- c) food packages for the homeless
- d) packages with lactose-reduced/lactose-free milk
- e) packages with calcium-fortified juice
- f) portability/usage packages
- g) formula packages for infants
- h) formula and medical foods (referred to as liquid nutrition products on participant materials) for women and children with special needs

C. WHO MAY PRESCRIBE FOOD PACKAGES

1. At Certifications. Only the CPA is allowed to prescribe or select food packages for participants. RD approval and medical prescriptions are required for issuance of non-contract (standard and special), low iron formulas, and medical nutritionals (see Part D). See policies 4.15 Special Formulas for Infants, 4.16 Non-Contract Standard Formulas, 4.17 Low-Iron Formulas, 4.18 Ready-to-Feed Formulas, and 4.21 Children/Women with Special Needs for additional issuance requirements.
2. Infants of WIC Mothers. Infants are often enrolled in WIC shortly after delivery, with the full certification completed by 6 weeks of age. At these enrollments, a clerk may issue a contract standard package. However, if the infant needs a different formula, the policies listed above in Part 1 apply. See also Policy 4.13 for policies pertaining to breastfeeding support.
3. Mid-Certification. Food package changes may be made mid-certification, as needed. The same policies for issuance at certification apply, except that a draft issuance clerk may make the following food package changes. However, the Project may decide that only CPAs may make these changes. The Project's policy should be written (e.g., see the WIC Project Nutrition Policy Options).
 - a) form of formula (e.g., from powdered to concentrate). For ready-to-feed, see b)(4).
 - b) quantities of milk and cheese
 - c) quantity of formula for breastfeeding infants. However, the clerk should be trained on how to inquire about the reason(s) for the change and refer to a CPA or breastfeeding educator as needed (e.g., for breastfeeding problems). If not, it is recommended that CPAs or breastfeeding educators handle requests for formula quantity changes.
 - d) prenatal to breastfeeding enhanced or postpartum package at draft issuances that occur between the mother's delivery and her recertification



D. MEDICAL PRESCRIPTIONS AND RD APPROVALS

The issuance of non-contract standard iron-fortified formulas, low iron formulas, special formulas, and medical nutritionals requires medical documentation and RD approval. See policies 4.15 Special Formulas for Infants, 4.16 Non-Contract Standard Formulas, 4.17 Low-Iron Formulas, 4.18 Ready-to-Feed Formulas, and 4.21 Children/Women with Special Needs for additional issuance requirements.

1. Medical documentation. Documentation from a physician, physician's assistant, or an advanced practice certified nurse prescriber (i.e., nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives who have obtained certification in order to prescribe) is required for the issuance of WIC-approved non-contract standard iron-fortified formulas, low iron formulas, special formulas, and medical nutritionals.
 - a) Medical documentation must include the brand name of the formula or medical nutritional prescribed, the medical diagnosis for which the product is required, quantity, intended length of use, and the signature of the physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice certified nurse prescriber. Written documentation is required and is to be filed in the participant's file.
 - b) Telephone calls may be used to obtain required information, but written documentation must be sent to the WIC Project (mail, e-mail, FAX, hand-delivered by participant). Request written documentation as soon as possible (e.g., within 2 weeks). File in the participant file along with the Project's initial documentation of information received by telephone.
 - c) Completeness of information prior to issuance:
 - (1) At a minimum, the prescription (written or verbal) must include the brand name of the product prescribed and the name of the prescriber. In these cases, issue 1 food package and obtain written documentation of all required information prior to the next issuance. If secondary nutrition education is not needed that month, the next food package(s) may be mailed.
 - (2) If all required information is obtained, including RD approval (see Part 2), issue the appropriate number of food packages (up to 3).
2. RD approvals. RD approval is required for the issuance of non-contract standard iron-fortified formulas, low iron formulas, special formulas, and medical nutritionals. The purpose is to assure adherence to the medical documentation and issuance requirements; appropriateness of the product prescribed and follow-up with the physician if not; and appropriateness of nutrition counseling, referrals, and the scheduling of secondary nutrition education.



- a) If the CPA is not an RD, contact the RD and obtain approval prior to issuance OR issue 1 food package and obtain RD approval prior to the next issuance. If a secondary nutrition education is not needed that month, the next food package(s) may be mailed.
- b) The Project or the Regional Office Nutrition Consultant may require RD approval prior to issuance if:
 - (1) The percentage of non-contract standard formulas on the WIC902 is greater than 5% or has been increasing over time
 - (2) The percentage of special formulas on the WIC902 is especially high (e.g., greater than 5%), indicating potential over-issuance when contract formulas – or breastfeeding – are preferable
 - (3) Past chart audits or reports of individual cases document inadequate or inappropriate nutrition services (e.g., staying on a formula longer than the intended length of use), inappropriate or inadequate nutrition counseling provided at issuance, lack of appropriate follow-up)

E. PROJECT-DESIGNATED FOOD PACKAGES

Upon occasion, a participant may need a combination of foods that is not available as an automated package. If a particular combination is used frequently, inform the State WIC Office; development of an automated package may be warranted.

- 1. CPAs may create a new food package as long as the foods and quantities are allowed for that status or category and per State policies. For example, Projects may:
 - a) Combine predesignated draft types into a new food package (#999) (e.g., combination of standard and special formula).
 - b) Create new draft type(s) (#999) for a new food package (#999).
 - c) Combine a predesignated draft type with a new draft type (#999) into a new food package (#999).
- 2. When issuing 999 drafts, there is a reject parameter based on the average price of these drafts. If the retail price is high (e.g., special formulas), choices are to issue more drafts (e.g., 2 or 3 instead of 1 or 2). Contact the State WIC Office if more information is needed.



3. Examples of NOT-allowed food packages are: half Infant/half Child packages, half regular/half special needs packages.

F. MONITORING FOOD PACKAGE ISSUANCE

Food package issuance may be monitored by reviewing two ADP reports.

1. The Participation by Food Package (WIC807) report, produced quarterly, lists the number of all the food packages issued in the past month. Look for:
 - a) the variety of food packages issued. For example, if all children receive food packages 161 and 164, or if all pregnant women receive food package 151, CPAs need to be encouraged to tailor food packages for preferences and nutritional needs.
 - b) the number of 999 food packages issued. If more than 10 are issued on a routine basis, determine why, and assure compliance with food package issuance policies.
2. The Composite Report, produced semi-annually, includes the percentage of infants receiving non-contract standard formula (the goal is <1%; >5% indicates improvement is needed), special formulas, and lactose-reduced/free milk packages.

G. MODIFYING DRAFTS

A CPA may circle a food item on a draft (for emphasis) or delete food item(s) off draft(s) because of nonuse or to avoid abuse. (See pages 4-8 of the System Manual).

H. FOR MORE INFORMATION

1. Chapter 5 of the System Manual includes information on the food packages and a listing of all the automated food packages with their draft numbers.
2. Chapter 6 of the System Manual includes the automated draft type messages.

I. PARTICIPANT EDUCATION

(see also Policy 3.31 Nutrition Education: Certification Appointments)

1. Review the nutritional value of the WIC foods prescribed, as appropriate for the participant (e.g., iron, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, protein, folic acid, fiber, etc.; see also Nutrition Facts About WIC Cereals in the Attachments) and the amounts provided (see WIC Foods: Amounts Per Day and Month in the Attachments). Adapt the information to the participant's knowledge/previous education.



Food Package/Draft Issuance

2. Inform the participant that the foods are for the participant only, not the participant's household.
3. Provide information on how to select/purchase the appropriate foods.

ATTACHMENTS:

- * Copy of Food Package Tailoring/Selection Charts (copies may be ordered from the State WIC Office)
- * Nutrition Facts About WIC Cereals
- * WIC Foods: Amounts Per Day and Month